IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD

SPECIAL CIVIL APPLICATION No. 12744 of 2007

For Approval and Signature:

HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE D.H.WAGHELA Sd/-

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1 Whether Reporters of Local Papers may be allowed to see the judgment ?

2 To be referred to the Reporter or not ?

3 Whether their Lordships wish to see the fair copy of the judgment ?

4 Whether this case involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the constitution of India, 1950 or any order made thereunder ?

5 Whether it is to be circulated to the civil judge ? **1 to 5 NO**

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SANTOS @ RAVAN PRAVINCHANDRA GANDHI - Petitioner(s)
Versus
STATE OF GUJARAT & 2 - Respondent(s)

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Appearance :
MR ARVIND K THAKUR for Petitioner(s) : 1,MR KS TAMAYACHE for Petitioner(s) : 1,
MR SHIVANG SHUKLA ASSTT GOVERNMENT PLEADER for Respondent(s) :1-3,

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CORAM : HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE D.H.WAGHELA

Date : 30/10/2007

ORAL JUDGMENT :

1. By the present petition under Article 226 of the Constitution, petitioner has sought the

relief of order dated 12.02.2007 of his detention being set aside. That impugned order dated 12.02.2007 is issued by Police Commissioner, Vadodara in exercise of his powers conferred under the provisions of section 3 of the Gujarat Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act, 1985 ("PASA" for short) on the basis that the petitioner was found to be repeatedly indulging in anti-social activity of bootlegging and three offences being, almost simultaneous, III-C.R.Nos. 53, 57 and 61 of 2007 under the Prohibition Act were registered on 10.01.2007 and 11.1.2007 against the petitioner in City Police Station of Vadodara in which 97 bottles of liquor is stated to have been seized as muddamal. According to the grounds of detention supplied with the impugned order, even as the aforesaid offence was being investigated, other actions under the Prohibition Act were not possible and alcohol being injurious to health, there was likelihood of danger to public health on account of consumption of illicit liquor in which the petitioner was dealing. It is further stated that possibility of the petitioner continuing in anti-social activities could not be denied and hence it was found to be necessary to detain the petitioner after considering the documents and statements which were relied upon and supplied to the petitioner.

2. Even as the present petition was admitted on 10.05.2007 and an affidavit-in-reply of the detaining authority was ready and executed on 24.07.2007, it was submitted to this court and copy thereof supplied to the petitioner only on 29.10.2007 when the matter was taken up for final hearing. It is stated in that affidavit, *inter alia*, that *prima facie* involvement of the petitioner was established in the offence registered against him. It is further stated: "9*. ....I say and submit that three offences have been registered against the petitioner under the provisions of Bombay Prohibition Act. I say and submit that sufficient documentary evidence is available to establish that the petitioner is involved in the bootlegging activities. I say and submit that the petitioner is doing his bootlegging activities in a sequence. I say and submit that the liquor is injurious to health and likely to create health hazard in general public and, thus, public order has been disturbed. I say and submit that after verifying the documents placed before me, the order of detention is passed and the petitioner has been detained under the provisions of Section 2 (b) of PASA as "Bootlegger", therefore, I passed the order of detention, which is legal, just and proper.*"

While arguing on the basis of the said affidavit, learned A.G.P. Mr.Shivang Shukla fairly conceded that the co-detenu, Mukeshsbhai Punambhai Dhobi, detained under identical order passed on the same grounds and material was already released upon the order of detention being set aside by this Court today in Special Civil Application No.12774 of 2007. It was also fairly conceded that neither any distinguishing feature from that case nor any additional arguments were available for the respondents.

3. In the above facts, it was sought to be argued on behalf of the respondents that danger to public health caused by the activity of bootlegging by the petitioner substantiated the assumption of likelihood of public order being adversely affected and, for that reason, the subjective satisfaction about the necessity of preventing the petitioner from acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order and the impugned order directing his detention were legal and justified.

4. As held by this court in ***Amarbhai Kanjibhai Nayak v. Commissioner of Police, Ahmedabad City & Ors. [1993 (3) G.L.R. 2703]*** and in ***Sohanlal Surajaram Visnoi v. State of Gujarat [2004 (2) G.L.R. 1051]***, solitary incident of

violation of prohibition law, normally, without anything more, would not be a problem to the maintenance of public order and, for such solitary incident, no person can be detained under the Act. It was also seen from analysis of the provisions of sub-section (4) of section 3 and the Explanation appended thereto that the presumption of likelihood of public order being adversely affected could arise, if danger were caused to life or public health, but such danger has to be grave or widespread for the mandatory presumption of likelihood of public order being adversely affected. In the facts of the present case, nothing from the material on record could substantiate or justify the presumption of grave or widespread danger to life or public health and hence, the presumption of likelihood of public order being adversely affected could not have been legally availed by the detaining authority for the purpose of arriving at the subjective satisfaction.

5. Therefore, in the facts and circumstances, the impugned order dated 12.02.2007 of preventive detention is found and held to be unsustainable in law and set aside with the direction that the petitioner, Santos @ Ravan Pravinchandra Gandhi, shall be set at liberty forthwith unless required to be detained

in connection with any other case. Rule is made absolute accordingly. Direct service is permitted.

Sd/-
(D.H.Waghela, J.)

(KMG Thilake)